Fun Personality Quizzes! ★ Posters and Cute Animal Stickers

March/April 2015

American Girl

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9 creative bedroom projects

* Advice about secrets
* Beautiful dyed eggs

Plus!
What it's like to have quintuplet siblings

ADVERTISEMENT

La Patisserie

New!

Meet

Grace Thomas™

girl of the year®

Grace is always thinking up big plans—like starting a business with her friends! But when she and her mom go to Paris for the summer, it seems as if nothing is going the way she'd hoped. Can Grace learn to stay open to new ideas? If so, she may return home with her biggest, sweetest plan yet!

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Volume 23, Number 2

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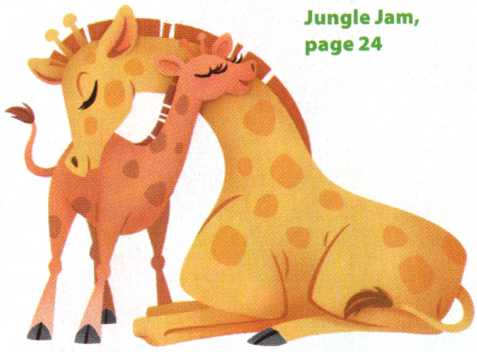

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Pattern Play 30

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Plus AG's adorable animal stickers!

Safety first!
Some of our projects and activities require an adult's help.
When you see this symbol, be sure to ask an adult to work with you.

Cover photo: Steven Talley

Girls EXPRESS®

Pick a Chick

Turn fruit into a flock of yummy birdies!

Use large and small melon ballers to scoop out small heads and large bodies from **honeydew, watermelon,** or **cantaloupe.** Cut small balls in half for wings.

Assemble the birds, using toothpicks if necessary. Use clean scissors to snip **raisins** for eyes. Carefully place the birds on a small baking sheet and freeze for 15 minutes.

Remove the birds from the freezer, and take out any toothpicks. Use a butter knife to slice **strawberries** into combs. Add the combs and **sliced almonds** for beaks. Sweet tweet!

For grass: Add a few drops of food coloring to shredded coconut in a zip-top plastic bag. Close, shake, and serve.

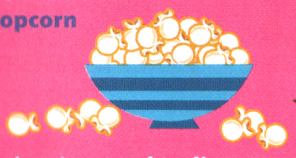
Meet an AG Reader

Rachael K.

Age 10, Michigan

In my free time, I like to go to auditions and act in plays and musicals at my local theater. I also like to write and hang out with my friends.

My favorite snack: buttery popcorn



A time I wanted to disappear: None—I really don't get embarrassed.

My proudest day: When I was cast as an assistant stage manager for a show. I was the youngest one they'd ever had!

Something no one would guess about me: I'm really random and weird. Also, I have a lizard named Hermes.

My favorite spot in my home: I really like my room. Specifically, my orange chair.

In 20 years, I'll be in Hollywood—either in front of or behind the camera.

My favorite part of AG: Definitely the stories. I'm a writer AND a reader.

Introduce Yourself!

To find out how to be a featured reader, go to americangirlmagazine.com/playmagazine

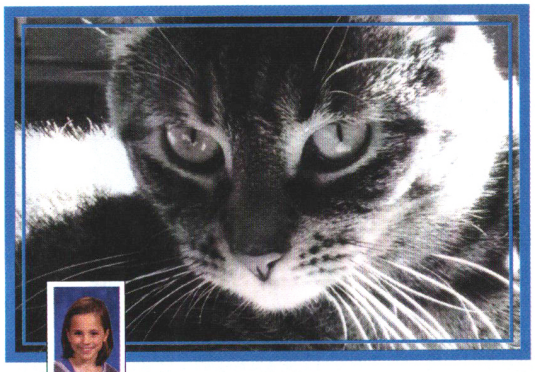
Photos: Radlund Photography Illustrations: Tracey Wood

AG Art Gallery

Girls love taking animal pics!

Help us fill our gallery! Send color copies of your **original artwork** or **photos** to the address on page 7. Sorry, we can't return entries.

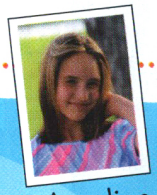
Molly M.
Age 13, Washington



Anna T.
Age 10, Illinois

Carly G.
Age 10, Colorado

Shining Star



Angelina

Ariana

To Angelina D. and her sister, Ariana, any time is a good time to dress up—especially holidays and birthdays. "It feels so good to put on a pretty dress, feel special, and get compliments," says Angelina, age 10. When she learned that some girls' families are not able to afford dress-up clothes, Angelina took action. "I wanted to make a difference," she says. So the sisters held a dress drive to collect party dresses for kids in need.

The Pennsylvania girls planned a donation day where friends and neighbors could buy lemonade to raise money for the cause and drop off a dress. The drive collected 71 dresses, from flowery sundresses in purples and pinks to velvety holiday outfits with lace, sparkles, and bows.

"I donated some of my favorite dresses," says Ariana, age 8. "I used to wear them everywhere."

Angelina also donated a special dress. "It was flowy and green with purple flowers and lace and was my favorite dress in the whole world," she says. "But knowing that other girls could dress up and feel special in it made me want to share. Knowing I could make a difference made me feel great."

You can shine, too. Collecting food and warm clothing for people in need is wonderful. You can also collect specialty items that kids need, such as sports equipment and shoes, room accessories, or stuffed animals.

Rock the Science Fair

Check out our poster tips before your next big project.

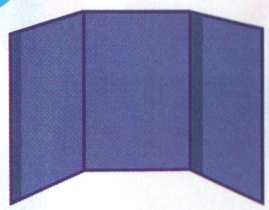
#1

You've done your research. You've reviewed the class rules for your poster.

Now Start

#2

Supply List


Three-panel display board

Colored paper

Pencil

Scissors

Tape measure or ruler

Glue stick or double-stick tape

#3

Type Tips

Choose a font that's not *super fancy*...

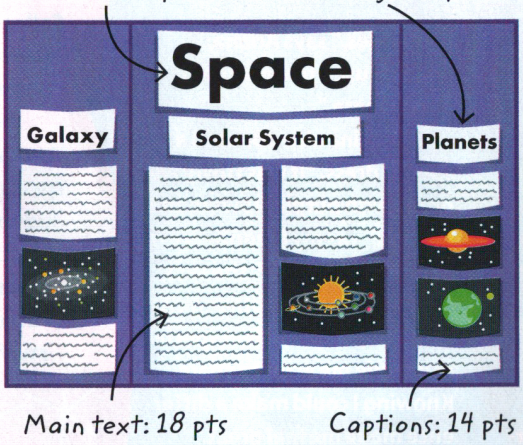
and is a **sans serif** font.

Don't use all caps.

HARDER TO READ

Easier to read

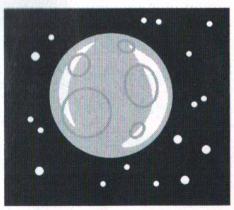
Try these type sizes for good readability.



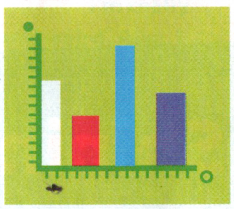
#4

Art Tips

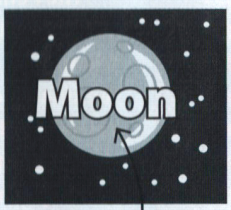
Find illustrations or pictures



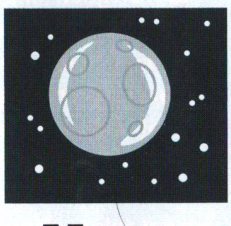
or make graphs to help explain your project.



Be careful using type over images—it can be hard to read.



Not so good

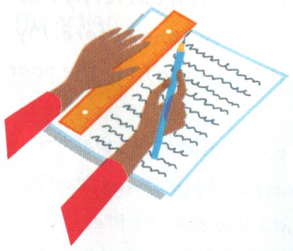


Good

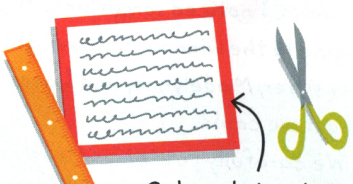
#5

More Art Tips

Use the ruler and pencil to draw straight lines, and then cut out each piece of info.

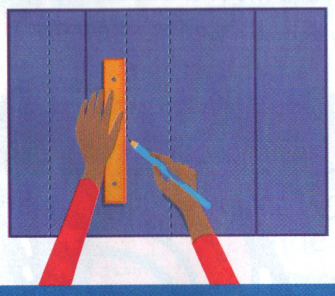


Measure and cut out colored paper to fit behind the info sheets. Glue or tape the info to the colored sheets.

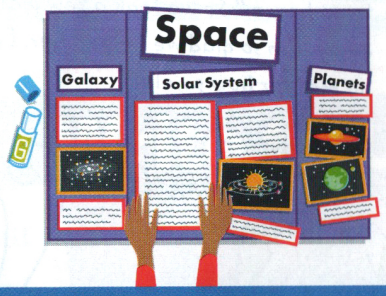


Colored sheets can be 1/4 to 1/2 inch larger all around.

Use the ruler and pencil to mark the column centers and the centers of your colored sheets.



Arrange all your info on the board. Center your sheets, and then glue or tape each piece onto the board.



Good luck at the fair!

AG Poll

Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare with those of other AG readers.

During a trip to a rainforest, what would you want to do?

* Observe animals
* Go zip-lining
* Shoot pictures
* Take a hike

At recess, what activity would you choose?

* Swinging on the swings
* Playing a sport
* Laughing with friends
* Making up a game

How would you describe your homework?

* Something that helps you learn
* Hard and time-consuming
* Light enough to finish at school
* Fun and interesting

AG Poll

What girls told us online

During a trip to a rainforest, you would

- **58%** go zip-lining.
- **20%** observe animals.
- **14%** shoot pictures.
- **8%** take a hike.

Ha-Ha! Ha-Ha!

At recess, you would be

- **56%** laughing with friends.
- **20%** swinging on the swings.
- **12%** playing a sport.
- **12%** making up a game.

Homework is

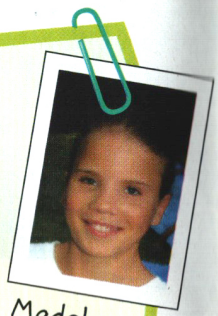
- **42%** hard and time-consuming.
- **21%** fun and interesting.
- **19%** light enough to finish at school.
- **18%** something that helps you learn.

To answer our weekly poll question, go to americangirl.com/playmagazine

True Story

Could Mary-Ashlynne and her sister save a freezing butterfly?

Mary-Ashlynne



Madelynne

Dear American Girl,

Where I live, we don't get much freezing-cold weather. So one frozen January day, I went outside to check on our plants to see if they'd survived the freeze. As I passed one of the windows on our house, I noticed something. A colorful monarch butterfly was clinging to the window, unmoving. I had never seen one before. My older sister, Madelynne, and I decided that we had to help the poor thing if we could.

We carefully put the butterfly onto a paper plate and went to find our old bughouse. We filled it with grass and put it next to the plate. Madelynne gently blew warm air onto the cold butterfly, which rolled over, stretched her wings, and slowly crawled into the bughouse. I guess the cold weather made her tired like it does to me! Madelynne and I named the butterfly Sunny.

The next day, we fed Sunny some orange and gave her water and nectar. She really liked it. It was warmer outside that day, and Sunny started flying at the window. "Madelynne," I said, "I think she wants to go home." So we took a few pictures and then watched Sunny fly away. I'm so glad we helped her. Every animal deserves a chance, no matter how small.

Sincerely,
Mary-Ashlynne G.

Age 11, Texas

Tell Us a Story!
Send your amazing True Stories to the address on page 7. Your tale just might appear in the magazine!

Mini Quiz

Yay-cation!

Which spring-break adventure is most like your personality?

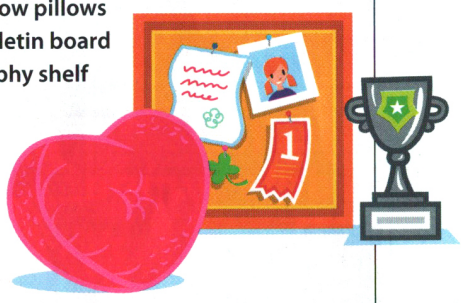
1. What's the best thing about spring?
- **a.** Feeling the sunshine on your face
- **b.** Playing outside
- **c.** Not having to wear a coat

2. What's the best thing about movies?
- **a.** The scenery
- **b.** The characters
- **c.** The action

3. What's the best thing about the mall?
- **a.** Taking a break in the food court
- **b.** Browsing in the stores
- **c.** Roaming with friends

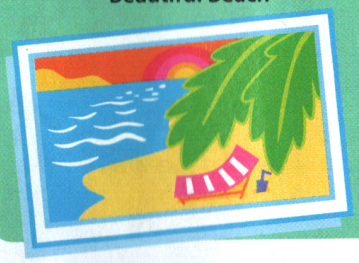
4. What's the best thing about school?
- **a.** Art
- **b.** Lunch
- **c.** Recess

5. What's the best thing about your room?
- **a.** Throw pillows
- **b.** Bulletin board
- **c.** Trophy shelf



Answers

Mostly a's
Beautiful Beach



Mostly b's
Bustling City

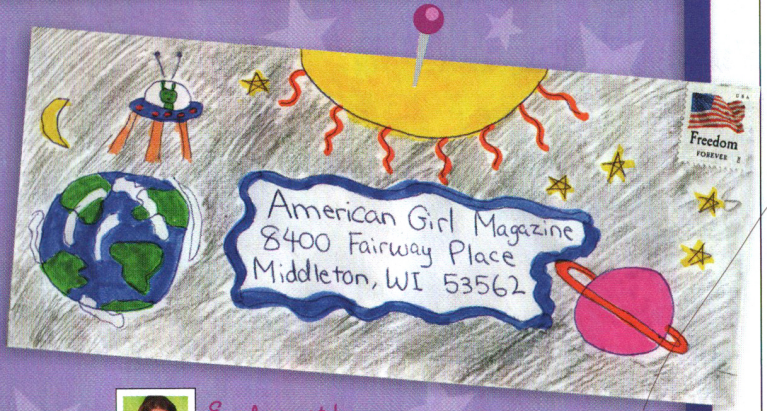
Mostly c's
Thrilling Theme Park

Write to Us

Be sure to include your
- First and last name
- Address and phone number
- Birth date, including year
- School photo or other portrait
- Parent's signature

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon!



Envelope art by
Gwen D.
Age 11, New Jersey

Fun-brellas

The umbrellas you created made us want to play in the rain!

Pigtailed Puddle Jumper

Lily R.
Age 9, Ontario

Cloudburst of Color

Grace W.
Age 11, California

Yum-brella

Janae A.
Age 10, Wyoming

Whale of a Storm

Annika F.
Age 12, Oregon

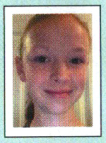
Doodle Downpour

Evie M.
Age 11, Virginia

Pitter-Patter Petals

Kaitlyn V.
Age 10, California

Umbrella-phant



Aubree M.
Age 12, Utah

Turtle-y Covered

Caroline M.
Age 12, Kentucky

Cool Scarecrows

Draw a one-of-a-kind scarecrow. Is it funny, or fashionable, or even bird-friendly? Help fill our fall scene with a unique scarecrow decorated top to bottom. To send us your original, cool scarecrow, follow the instructions on page 7. Postmark deadline: April 10, 2015. Winners will appear in the September/October 2015 issue. Sorry—we can't return entries. ★

Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer

Hair

What length is your hair?

Short: 10%

Medium: 50%

Long: 40%

Which hair color would you pick?

Blue: 38%

Pink: 28%

Purple: 24%

Green: 10%

Your favorite hairstyle is a **ponytail!**

Worst haircuts

Bad bangs

When the stylist cut my hair too short

When I cut my hair

Your favorite hair accessory is...

A ponytail elastic: 31%

A headband: 29%

Colorful extensions: 18%

A ribbon: 13%

A barrette: 9%

1/2
of you spend less than 10 minutes fixing your hair in the morning
Best Styles
Lots of layers
French braids
Curly
Do you wash your hair at night or in the morning?
3/4
of you wash your hair at night

Illustrations: Paige Pooler

Coming Up: Names

1. If you could change your real name, would you?
   Yes
   OR
   No

2. Where did your name come from?
   a. A relative
   b. A fictional character
   c. A celebrity or other famous person
   d. My parents just liked it
   e. other (please list)

3. Do you have a nickname? What is it?

4. Who gave you your nickname?
   a. Parents
   b. Siblings
   c. Another family member
   d. Friends
   e. Yourself

5. Make your name into art! Write your name and decorate the letters to match your personality.

Send your answers to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date. Postmark deadline: April 10, 2015. Some answers will appear in the September/October 2015 issue. ★

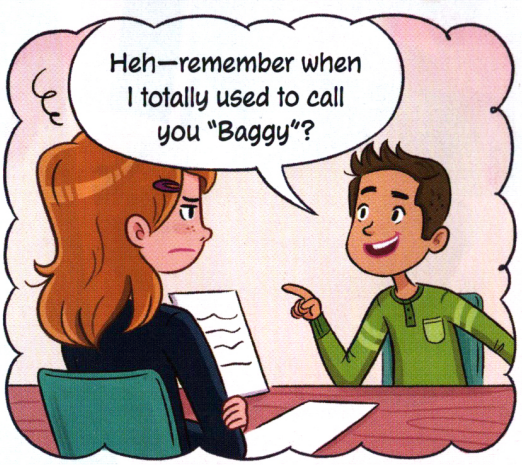
According to Aggie®

The Friendship Fiasco

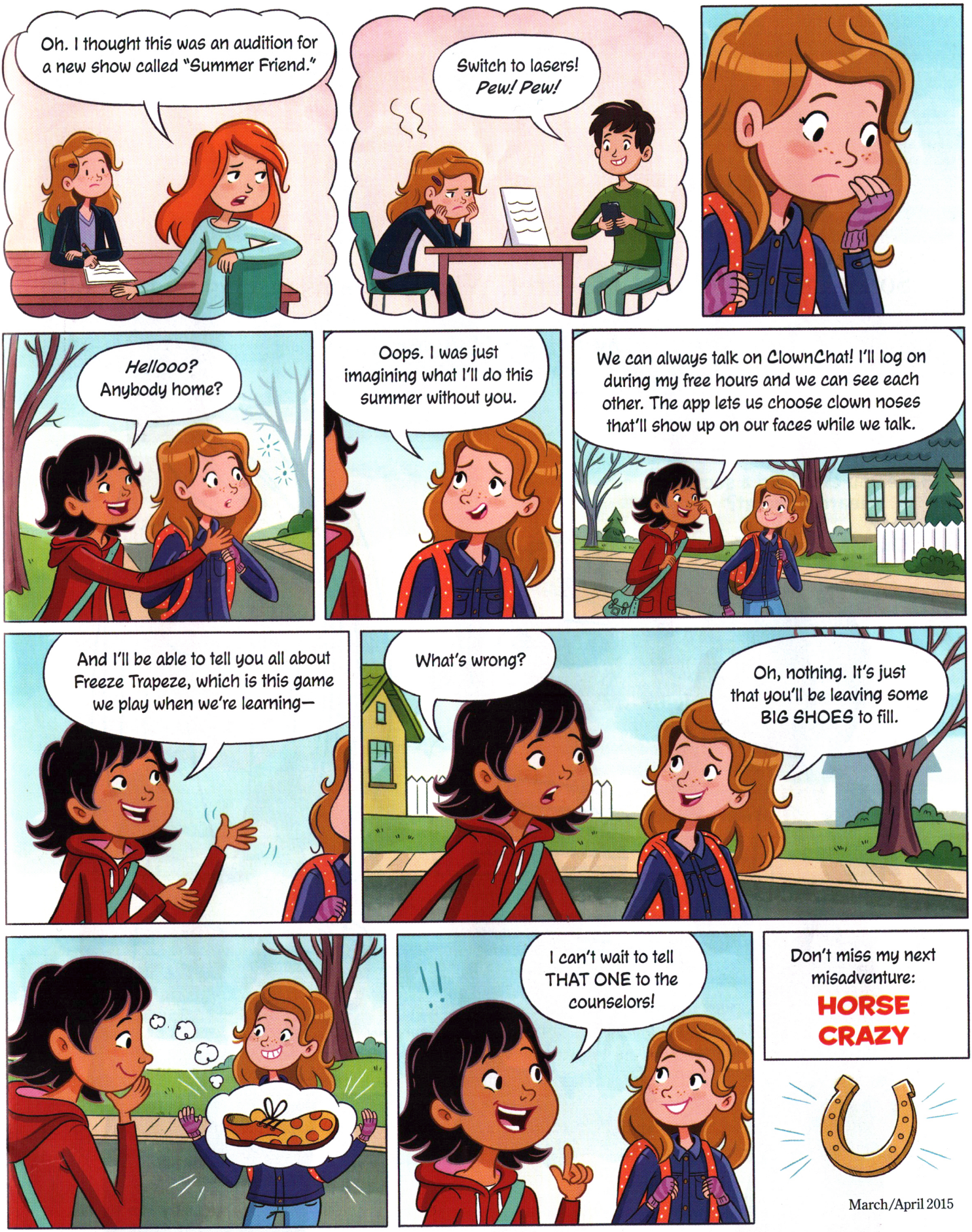
Illustrated by Genevieve Kote

... and I'll get to learn how to walk on a tightrope, and how to swing on a trapeze, and how to make people REALLY laugh in clowning!
Circus Camp sounds AMAZING!
And it's sleepaway camp. For almost the whole summer! I get to stay in a really cool cabin with seven other girls, and we get to do circus crafts, and counselors make circus jokes like, "Oh no, what's wrong? Are you feeling ... FUNNY?!"
And Friday-night dinners are always "Clown Hair and Noses," which is really just spaghetti and meatballs, and ...

I really love to play with my Brydle Ryder Horses. They're super beautiful. Each one is unique! But I don't really like other people to touch them, so ...



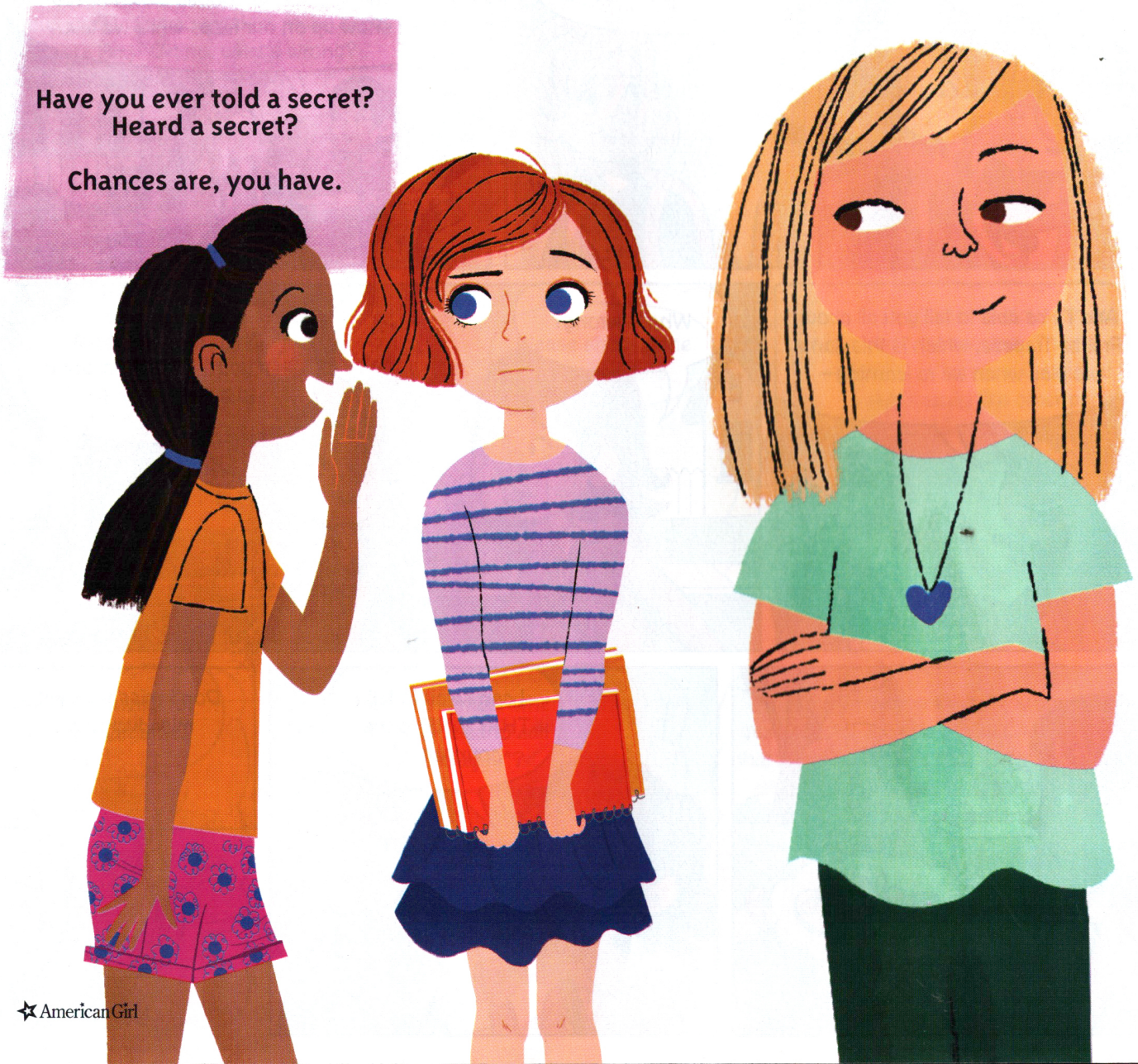
... so my mom was like, "You are SOOO grounded," and I'm like, "You CANNOT, like, do that to me!" and she's like, "I'm the boss of you," and I guess she, like, IS, y'know, technically, but, like, I do NOT understand why, like ...


Oh. I thought this was an audition for a new show called "Summer Friend."
Switch to lasers! Pew! Pew!
Hellooo? Anybody home?
Oops. I was just imagining what I'll do this summer without you.
We can always talk on ClownChat! I'll log on during my free hours and we can see each other. The app lets us choose clown noses that'll show up on our faces while we talk.
And I'll be able to tell you all about Freeze Trapeze, which is this game we play when we're learning—
What's wrong?
Oh, nothing. It's just that you'll be leaving some BIG SHOES to fill.
I can't wait to tell THAT ONE to the counselors!
Don't miss my next misadventure:
HORSE CRAZY

To Tell or Not to Tell?

Someone just told you a secret. What happens next is up to you.

by Nancy Holyoke

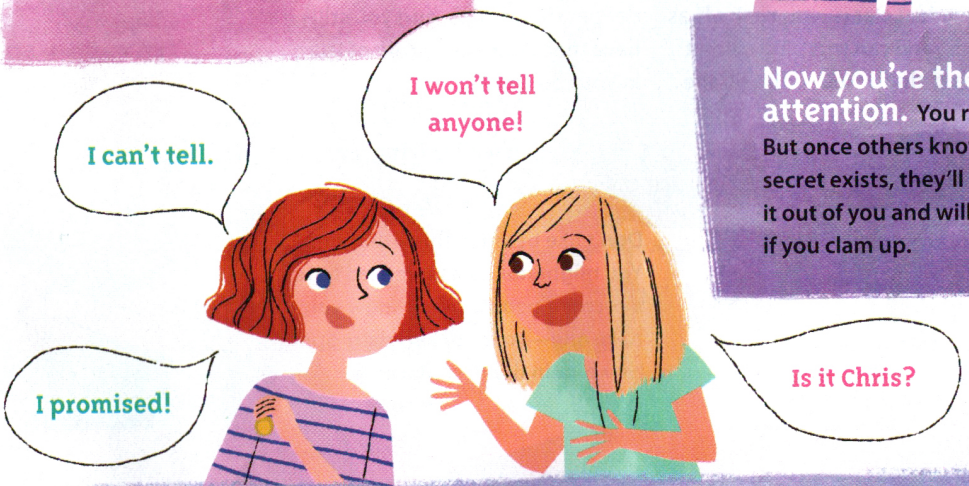


Sharing a secret with another girl is a way of saying, *I trust you. You're special to me. We're close.* If you're excited or troubled, it feels good to have someone to confide in. But put other friends into the mix and things can change pretty fast. Does this sound familiar?

You know a secret. That secret feels like a little gold coin in your pocket. You're special. You've got something valuable. The problem is that nobody knows you have it.

So maybe you drop a teeny-tiny hint. You want people to know that you know more than they do. You want them to know how close you are to your friend.

Now you're the center of attention. You refuse to tell. But once others know that the secret exists, they'll want to pry it out of you and will be ticked off if you clam up.



You want to tell. Your brain starts to whir: Maybe that coin in your pocket could buy you something here. If you tell, maybe this other girl will like you more. What's the harm, after all? She won't tell anybody. She promised. And, anyway, most people probably know already. Your friend shouldn't be so hush-hush about it.

What happens next?

Illustrations: Brigette Barrager

The moment arrives.

There are two ways this can end.

1. You tell.

You give this other girl that little coin in your pocket. Is she a better friend now? No. Are you closer to her? No. You can't buy friends by betraying other friends. You haven't gained anything. But she has. She's got something she can use to hurt both your friend and your friendship.

What will she do with it?
Who knows? Whatever she likes. It's all in her hands.

How do you feel at this moment?
Not happy. You're too busy dreading the moment your friend finds out what you've done.

How will she feel about you?
Not good.

And what can you expect from other people when *you* need a friend to confide in?
Not much.

2. You don't tell.

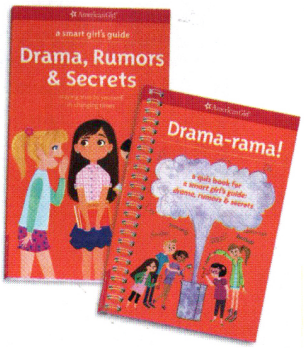
You may get some blowback from people who wish you would talk, but it will pass.

When the dust clears, you walk off as a girl someone can trust. You didn't do the easy thing. You didn't do the tempting thing. You did the *right* thing. You'll like yourself for that, and other people will like you more, too. You can look forward to deeper friendships, and you still have that bright little coin of trust in your pocket.

You get to choose. Good luck.

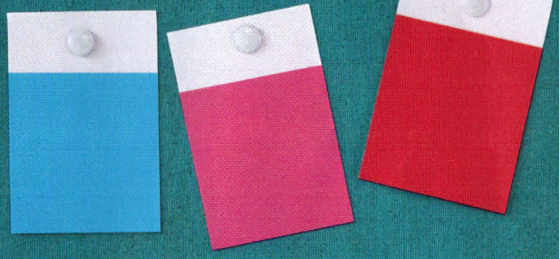
Don't like being in this situation? You might not be as tempted to tell a secret if people don't know you have one—so try to avoid dropping that hint in the first place! ★

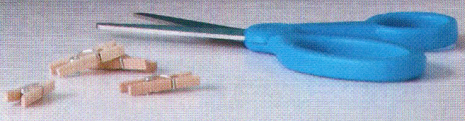
Much more advice and ideas for avoiding drama can be found in *A Smart Girl's Guide: Drama, Rumors & Secrets* and its companion quiz book, *Drama-rama!*



Style Your Space

Whether you want a place to relax, create, or hang out, we've got a bedroom for you!





Photos: Radlund Photography

Relaxing Retreat

If your room is where you recharge, try these ideas to make it a soothing space.

Pretty Plants

If you can't grow greenery, make it instead. Cut out leaf shapes from felt. Then gather the leaves at one end and wrap with a rubber band. Place the plant in a container. Fill the container with stones (available at craft stores), covering the wrapped end.

Tree Rings

Create woodsy wall decals. First, cover your work surface. Then use masking tape to cover sections of wood slices (available at craft stores). Paint the uncovered sections using nontoxic acrylic paint. Let dry; then remove the tape. Ask an adult to attach the decals to a wall.

Use soft textures in your room—fake fur, feathers, and fleece—to make it comfy.

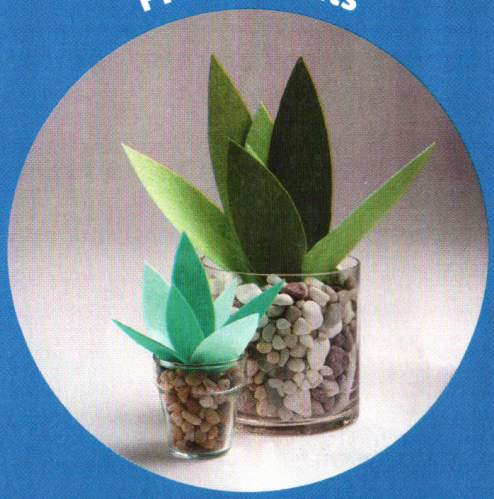
Use nature for inspiration—waves, sun, trees, and more. (We chose this bed's colors because they remind us of an ocean sunset!)

Feather Lantern

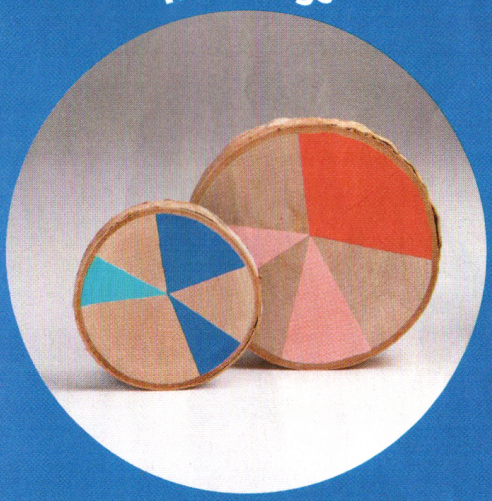
A fuzzy lamp adds a cozy glow. Start with a vase. Cut a piece of feather trim that's long enough to cover the vase. Use craft glue to attach one end of the trim near the top. Let dry. Continue wrapping the vase, and glue the other end of the trim near the bottom. Place a battery-powered LED light inside.

Safety first!
Be sure to use an LED light. Other lights will cause the jar to become too hot.

Pretty Plants



Tree Rings



Feather Lantern

Creative Studio

If your room is where you craft and create, here's how to make it an inspiring place.

Craft Caddy

Keep supplies within reach. Start with a cardboard box that's at least 3 inches tall. Remove the lid or flaps, and decorate the box with colorful tape. Fill the box with decorated cardboard tubes. Use the caddy to store pencils, pens, markers, and more.

Inspiration Board

Use pretty pictures and encouraging words to jump-start your creativity. First, cover your work surface. Then paint a corkboard using nontoxic acrylic paint. Let dry. Cut pieces of pom-pom trim that fit across the board. Use thumbtacks to attach each piece of trim at both ends. Attach items to the trim using mini clothespins.

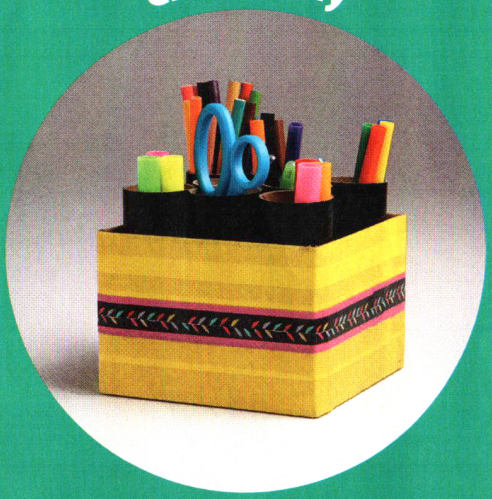
Make a headboard using strips of washi tape. (Be sure to ask an adult's permission first.)

Try mismatched sheets and blankets on your bed. We used stripes with flowers.

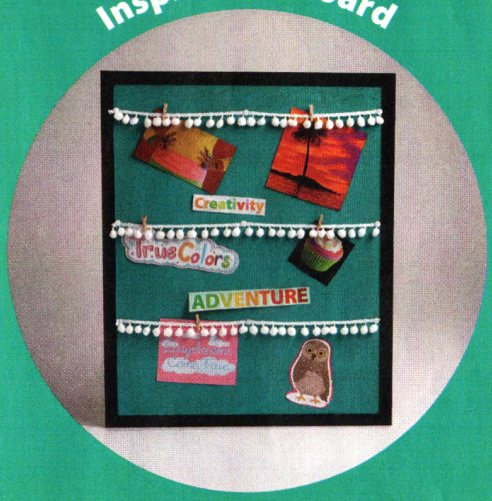
A to Z Bookends

Start with four cardboard letters, two A's and two Z's (available at craft stores). Ask an adult to make a small hole in the bottom of each letter. Pour ½ cup of dried beans into each one. Next, cover each hole with a piece of tape. Stack the A's and Z's together and wrap them in decorative tape.

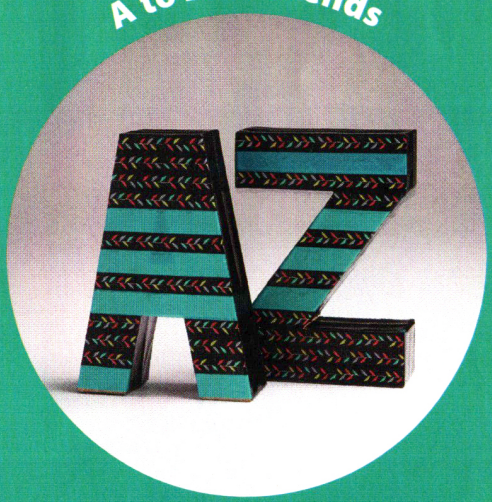
Craft Caddy



Inspiration Board



A to Z Bookends

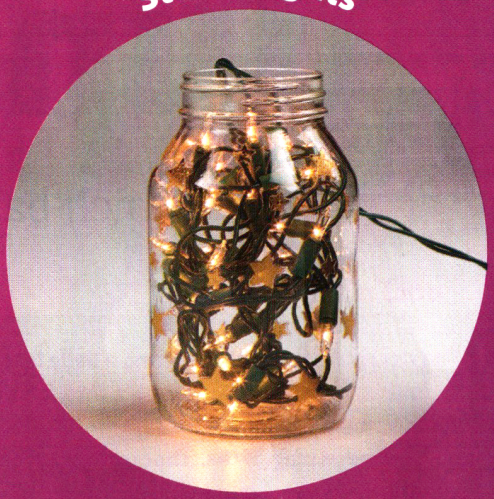


Happy Hangout

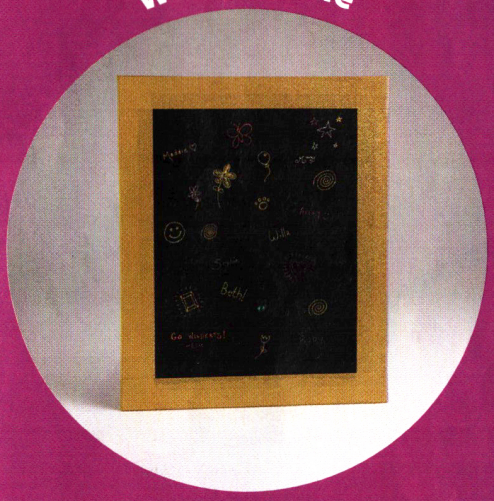
If your room is social central, here's how to make it a fun place for friends—and you!

Touch the Sky!
Starry Lights
Festive lights are perfect for parties or everyday fun. Decorate a clear jar with star-shaped stickers, and place a string of LED twinkle lights inside.
Safety first!
Be sure to use LED lights. Other lights will cause the jar to become too hot.
Wall of Fame
Collect visitors' autographs! Start with a foam display board. Then use glitter duct tape to make a border. When friends visit, they can sign the board.
Can't paint the walls? Add bold color with other decorations. We chose an emerald bedspread and purple rug.

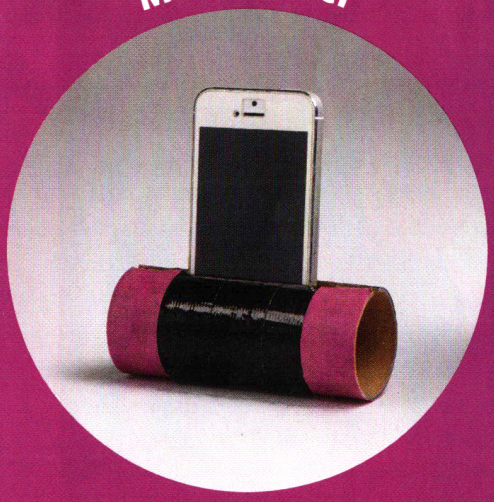
Starry Lights



Wall of Fame



Music Maker



Music Maker

Share songs with a simple speaker. First, use scissors to cut along the length of a cardboard tube. Cover the tube with decorative tape, and trim any overlap. Press two pushpins into the back of the tube to hold it upright. Place your music player inside, and turn up the volume! ★

Pillows with fun cases can be used as floor cushions. Instant seats for friends!

Jungle Jam

Which baby animal are you most like?

1. **The new girl at school is looking a little lost. You...**

a. tell her to follow you and zoom through the halls on a speedy tour.

b. hand her a map of the school and point out the office.

c. invite her to sit with you at lunch so you can tell her all about your school.

2. **Your favorite after-school activity is...**

a. soccer, basketball, hockey—anything fast!

b. reading and writing—you love "me" time.

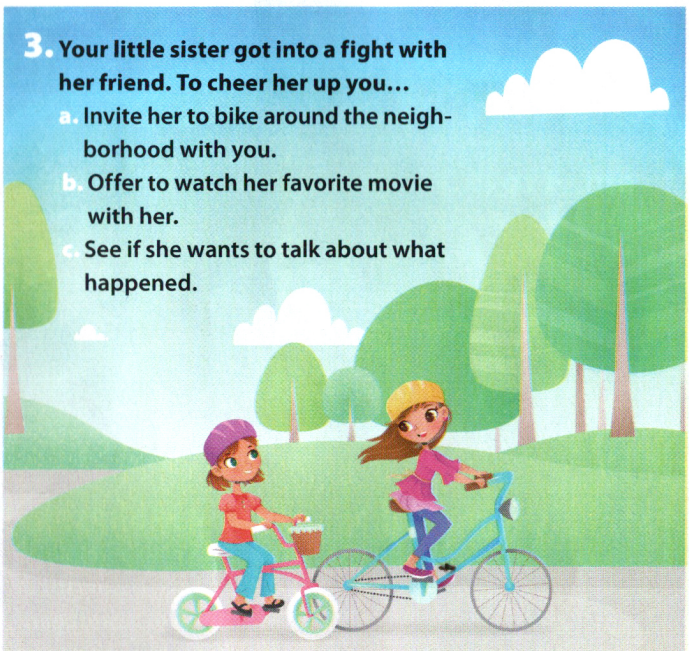
c. spending quality time with friends and family.

3. **Your little sister got into a fight with her friend. To cheer her up you...**

a. Invite her to bike around the neighborhood with you.

b. Offer to watch her favorite movie with her.

c. See if she wants to talk about what happened.



4. **One of your friends is switching schools at the end of the month. You...**

a. invite her to join your club volleyball team so you can still hang out.

b. suggest that you become pen pals and write each other letters every month.

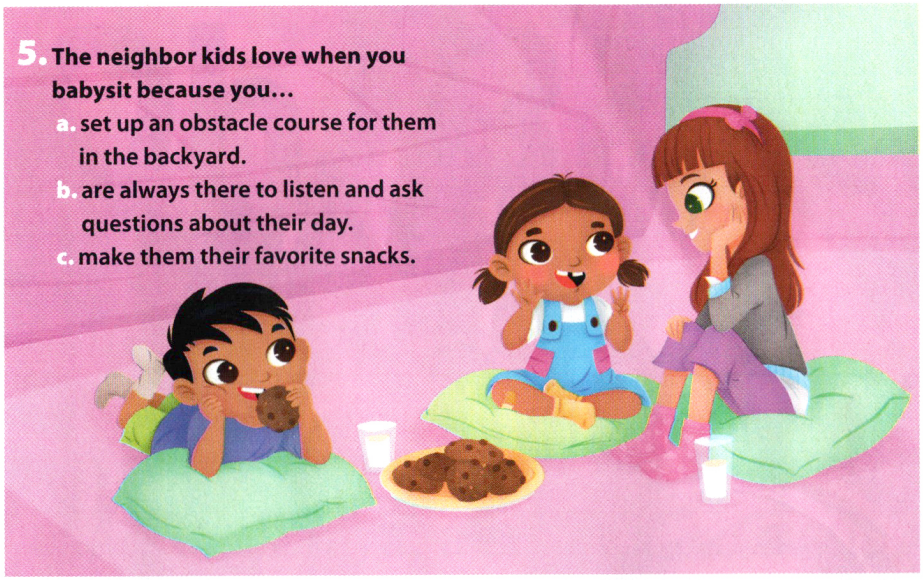
c. give her your favorite stuffed animal and promise to visit her as much as you can.

5. The neighbor kids love when you babysit because you...

a. set up an obstacle course for them in the backyard.

b. are always there to listen and ask questions about their day.

c. make them their favorite snacks.



6. During recess or lunchtime you are often found...

a. racing your friends on the track.

b. listening to your friends chatter away.

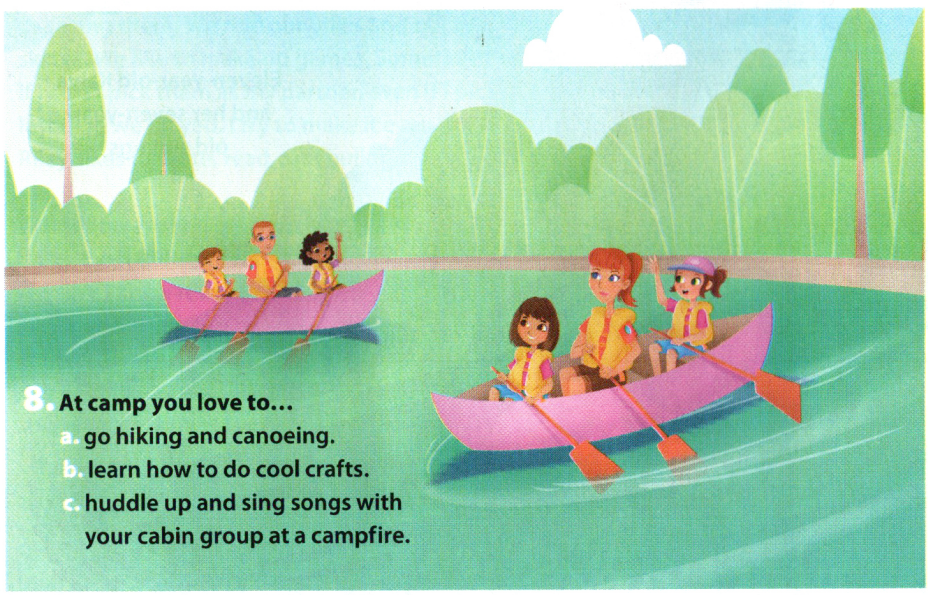
c. helping a friend study for a test.

7. When you are assigned a lot of homework you...

a. race through it right away so you can go outside and play.

b. sit down and tackle each subject one by one, being careful not to miss anything.

c. invite your friends over for a study party.



8. At camp you love to...

a. go hiking and canoeing.

b. learn how to do cool crafts.

c. huddle up and sing songs with your cabin group at a campfire.

Illustrations: Maria Sarria

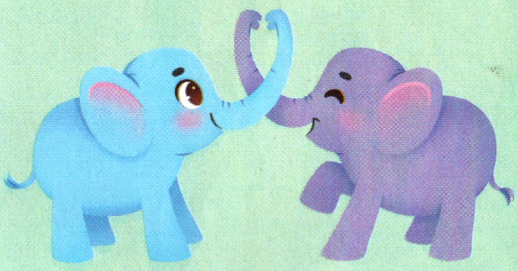
Answers:

Mostly A's: Lion

Your fast-paced life and ambitious attitude make you a lion cub. You're most in your element while on an adventure or on the move. Exploring and learning about new things are some of your favorite things to do, and your curiosity is always in full bloom.

Mostly B's: Giraffe

Your calm demeanor and good listening skills make you a giraffe. While you may not be the loudest person in the group, you're very observant and wise beyond your years. You feel most at ease after some much-deserved "me" time.



Mostly C's: Elephant

Your outgoing and friendly nature makes you an elephant. You're always more than happy to help others, and you tend to see the positive side of things. You're very compassionate and are often thinking of others. ★

Eleven-year-old Kaiya and her seven-year-old siblings

Oh, Brothers!
Oh, Sisters!

Meet Kaiya, a sister with a supersized family that includes two parents, an older brother, and *quintuplets*—five little siblings born together!

AG: How is your family different from other families?
Kaiya: We have a lot more kids than most families. Sometimes we can be a little shy, but we can also be talkative and noisy.

AG: What is it like having quintuplets in your family?
Kaiya: Mostly it's special to have quints in the family, but I don't brag. Pretty much, you can never be bored with so many kids around. I always have a person to play with. Most of my friends think the quints are cute, but some can't keep their names straight!

AG: What's a typical day like with the quints?
Kaiya: When I come home from school or swim practice, I get to do stuff with my brothers and sisters. I look forward to seeing them. We ride our bikes and our scooters and our skates. We like to make up games. Sometimes the girls are sad if I don't pick them as my partner, even if I picked that one the last time we played. I try to make it even. My older brother, Riley, likes to skate, read, and build forts with the quints.

AG: What was it like when they were first born?
Kaiya: Even though I was only four when they were born, I'm sure I knew it was going to be special to get a bunch of younger brothers and sisters. But I might not have expected it to be as noisy as it is.

AG: How noisy is it?
Kaiya: In the morning, usually people are getting up and sometimes yelling or just talking and playing, so that gets noisy. At the table, when we're eating, the kids yell and sing really loud. Sometimes they cry if they don't like what's for dinner. Sometimes they just talk too much.

AG: What are some of your favorite memories with the quints?
Kaiya: When they were little, we had them do crawling races and called it the "Quint Olympics." Riley and I did the commentary, and my dad filmed it. On summer vacations we go to visit our grandparents in Ohio and Texas. Taking an airplane with so many kids would be too expensive, so we drive. We have a big white van that holds 12 people. It's pretty fun.

> "Family matters a lot to me. It's important for me to help."

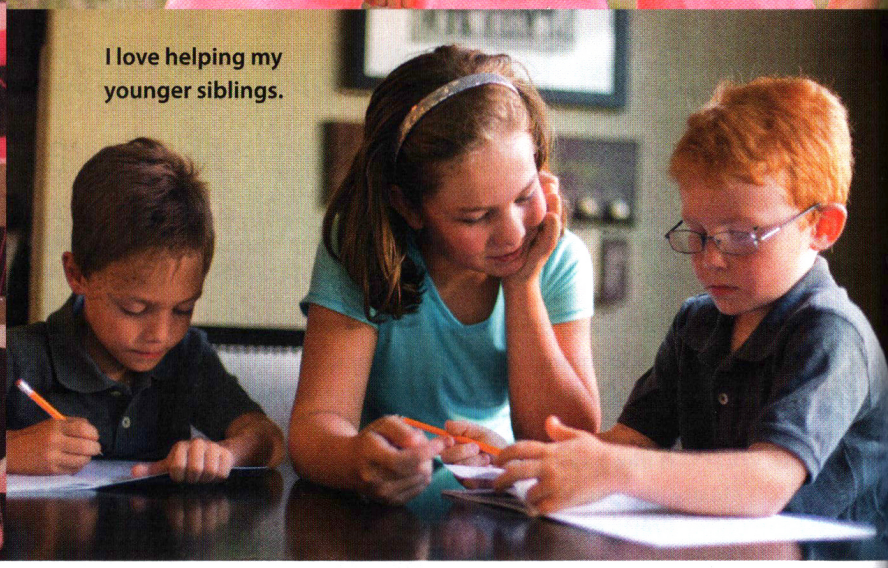
AG: What is the hardest part about having so many siblings?
Kaiya: They whine a lot. And our house is, like, never clean.

AG: What if you need time alone?
Kaiya: I do plenty of things on my own, like playing piano and competing in swimming and volleyball. If I need time to myself at home, I go in my room and close the door. I usually do my homework after they go to bed.

Photos: Amber Snow

Relaxing alone in my own room

Kaydence, Kassidy, and Kyndall goofing around



I love helping my younger siblings.

"I could never imagine my life without them."

AG: How do you think the quints would describe you?
Kaiya: They would probably describe me as nice and fun. I help them clean their rooms (the two quint boys share a room, and the three quint girls share a room) after I finish mine. But even if we're just cleaning, it's fun to do it together. Sometimes I help them with their homework. I show them little tricks and things I learned when I was their age.

AG: How are you and your brothers and sisters alike?
Kaiya: I think we all are pretty creative in our own way. I like to paint, and I like to make up little tunes on the piano that sound nice.

AG: How has having quints in your family changed you?
Kaiya: It has helped me learn how to be more responsible because I help take care of them. Sometimes I tell my friends I can't get together because I have to babysit the quints. I don't mind, because family matters a lot to me. It's important for me to help. If my mom is ever stressed or tired, I help.

AG: What do people say when they meet your family for the first time?
Kaiya: Sometimes they say "Wow!" And sometimes they ask things like, "You have that many kids in your family?"

AG: What's the most fun part of the day?
Kaiya: Even if the quints are busy doing something, when I get home, they stop what they're doing and give me hugs. I always feel really happy when they do that because it shows that they love me. I could never imagine my life without them.

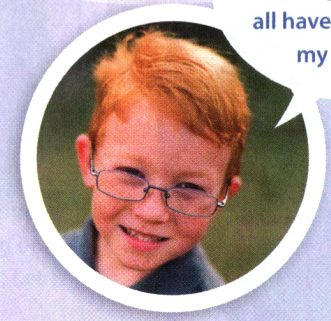
Quint Countdown

Having quintuplets is rare. It was a ton of work for my parents to take care of five babies at once! Here's a rundown of what my siblings are like now, in the order they were born. Did I mention they were all born within three minutes?

Kassidy: She's the tallest of the girls and sometimes she acts like she's the boss, but in a good way. She's like a little mom. She tells everybody when it's time to clean, and she's really good at cleaning her room.

Kaydence: She's really nice, and she loves to give hugs. She likes the color yellow. We like to do a lot of the same things, like dancing and playing tag. She's always happy (well, most of the time).

Rustin: He's got red hair like my grandpa. He likes to give hugs, and he loves to play with cars and trucks.



Kyndall: She's very creative and likes to draw stick-figure girls with curly hair—and they actually look really good for a seven-year-old! She likes animals, especially baby animals.

Ryder: He's technically the baby of the family, but he's the tallest of the quints and also the fastest at running and biking. He likes to win, and he builds really cool stuff with his toys.

See More!

Turn to page 48 for an outtake from our family photo shoot. ★

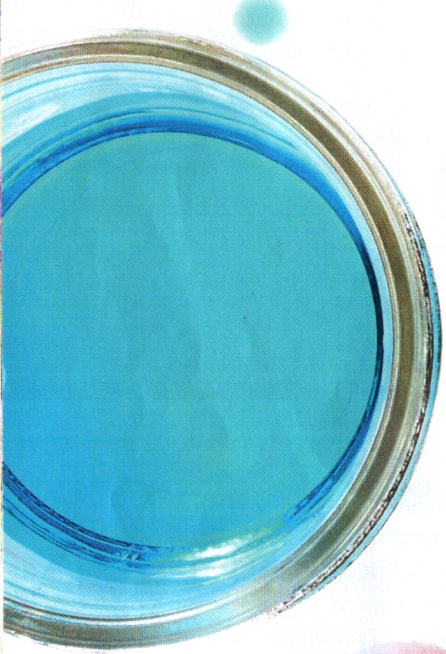
Pattern Play

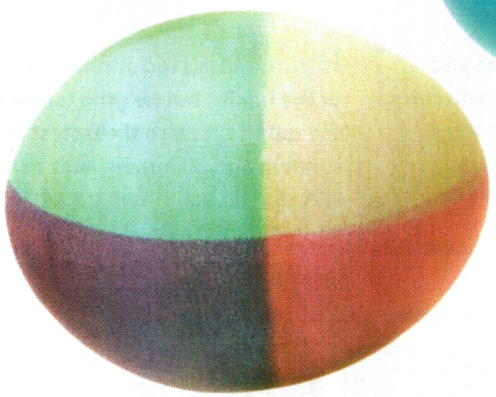
Decorate eggs with springtime designs!

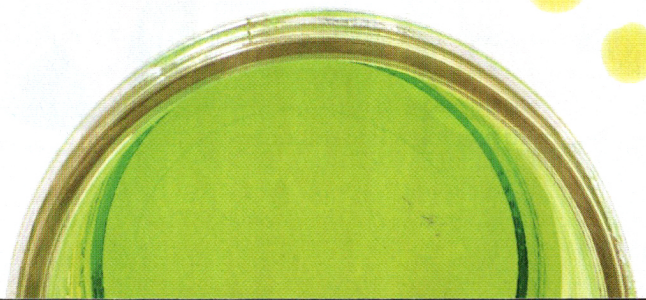
by Kristi Thom

Getting Started

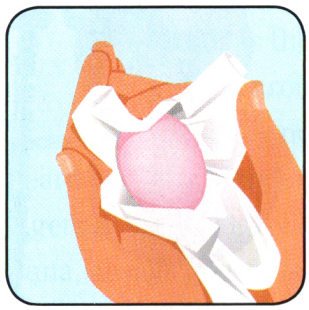
For each technique you'll need hard-boiled eggs and an egg-dyeing kit that includes a wire egg dipper. Before you begin, cover your work surface and clothing to protect against stains. Then ask an adult to help you mix the dye according to the package directions.







Stripes



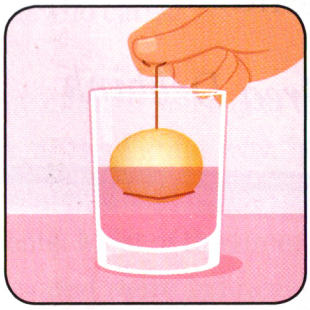
1. Dye an egg a light color such as pale pink. Dry it with a paper towel.

2. Dip the egg partway into dye as shown. Hold it in place until the color is a little darker than the visible part of the egg.

3. Repeat step 2 to make the next section even darker. Dry the egg with a paper towel.

Color-Block

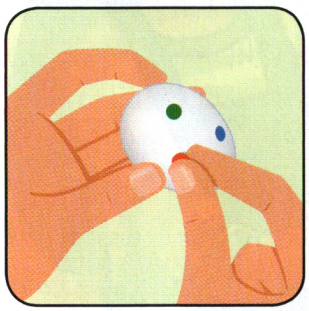
1. Dye an egg yellow. Dry it with a paper towel.



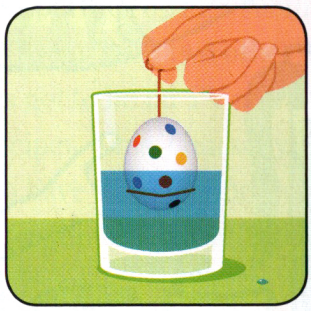
2. Dip the egg sideways into pink dye, dipping it only halfway as shown. Dry the egg again.

3. Dip the egg into blue dye, again dipping only halfway as shown. Let dry completely.

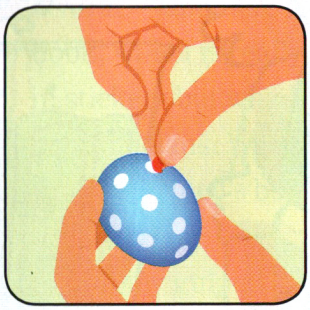
Dots



1. Cover an egg with small dot stickers.



2. Dye the egg a dark color such as blue. Let dry.



3. Remove the dot stickers to reveal polka dots.

For colored dots, dye the egg a light color before adding the dot stickers. Then dye the egg a dark color. ★

Photos: Radlund Photography Illustrations: Monika Roe

Recipe for Disaster

Sydney and Tabitha have big dreams for their own cooking show. Will a fight spoil their friendship—and their show?

by Andrea Debbink

"It really does look like swamp water," I said, as the murky green sludge swirled around in the blender.

Sydney nodded, but I doubt she heard me. The blender is pretty old and when it gets going, it wails like a tornado siren. My cat, Luna, always goes missing as soon as we pull the blender out of the cupboard. Just a few minutes ago, when Dad set up the blender, I saw a gray blur disappear down the hall.

Sydney popped the lid and sloshed the smoothie into two glasses.

"I still can't believe there's lettuce in here," I said, eyeing my glass.

"It's *spinach,* Tabitha. But who cares? You can't even taste it!"

Now she sounded like my mom. If you can't taste something, why put it in? But I knew why. Sydney loved science, and she said that recipes were like science experiments. Most of the time, her "science experiments" sound weird but taste fine. Cupcakes with lavender-flavored frosting, "French fries" made from zucchini. And the spinach smoothie in our glasses. This last "experiment" had helped us win our first contest ever—a kids' healthy recipe contest sponsored by a local TV station. About a month ago, our teacher Ms. Janssen had the whole class partner up and submit recipes. We actually won! (Along with two other pairs of kids.) The winners get to be on TV and show how to make their recipes. This Thursday, Sydney and I were going to have a dress rehearsal and practice our recipe in front of the class. Today, just Dad was the studio audience.

Sydney and I are pretty much the same person. We have the same middle name (Sophia), our bedrooms are painted the same color ("Coral Cloud," a fancy name for pink), and we eat sandwiches the same way (open-faced with extra cheese). But even more important than all that, we have the same dreams: to open a restaurant, write a few cookbooks, sing on Broadway, and, of course, star in a cooking show. Together.

We cook as often as our parents let us. No progress, however, on our parents building us our own kitchen. Believe me, we've asked. Sydney even drew the floor plans. (Last year for our birthdays they gave us aprons instead. It's a start.) We watch cooking shows together, too—*Dueling Chefs* is our favorite—and take notes in our confidential cookbook, which is really a beat-up blue binder covered in stickers but which holds all our top-secret recipes and plans. We share it, but it spends most of its time at Sydney's because she's better at not losing things.

Sydney gulped down her smoothie. "Mmm!" She's never afraid to try any kind of food. We saw a show once where the host ate one of the hottest peppers in the world dipped in chocolate. Sydney would do that. Then she'd ask for seconds.

Illustrations: Vera Brosgol

"It's good," I smiled. "So do you think we're ready for our rehearsal?"

"Of course," she said "We do this all the time, right?"

Thursday afternoon came quickly, and before we knew it, Ms. J was calling our names. We had it all planned out: I would introduce the recipe, then Sydney would start making the smoothie, and we'd finish together.

Ms. J gave us a few minutes to set up. Sydney pulled out the blender while I lined up the ingredients. We were wearing our teal aprons and our lucky beaded friendship bracelets.

"Do you have the script?" Sydney whispered as the class chattered away.

The script? Oops.

"Uh, no," I shrugged. "I forgot."

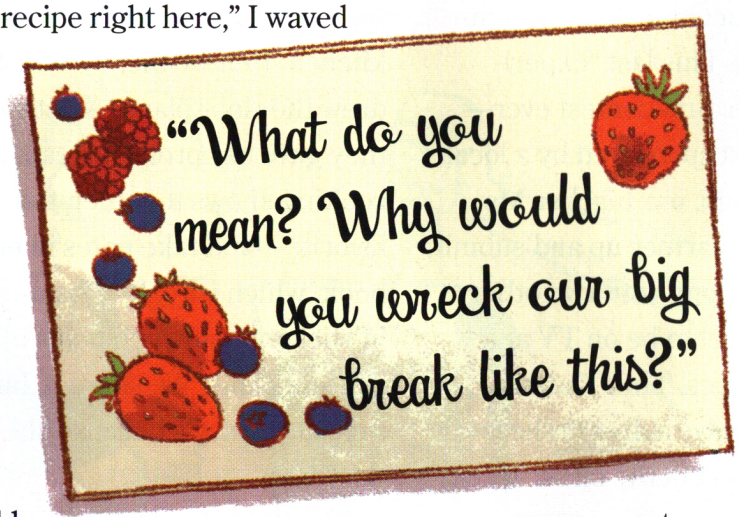
Sydney frowned.

"We don't need a script. We have the recipe right here," I waved the recipe card.

"Ready, girls?" Ms. J asked.

I nodded. Lights, camera, action!

The class quieted down and I launched into my intro just like I'd seen TV chefs do a hundred times—I even pretended the old reading lamp in the back of the room was a camera. This was easy. The studio audience—I mean the class—laughed in all the right places. Ms. J didn't ask me to speak up even once.



"... and now Sydney will show you how to get started," I said, turning to my left. But Sydney was staring at the floor.

"Sydney?" I asked.

"Um, yeah," she said "Um, the first thing you need is, uh, yogurt." Her voice was tiny and quiet. I wondered if the class could even hear her. Ms. J was going to tell her to speak up for sure. She reached for the yogurt and I saw that her hands were shaking. What was going on? She dumped the yogurt in the blender and continued, "Um, next you add, um, a quarter cup of milk ..."

"She means a half cup," I jumped in. "Right?"

Sydney nodded and stopped talking.

Uh-oh. On live TV, you never want this to happen. It's called dead air. I had to think fast, and talk even faster.

"Great! Then after the milk, you add the spinach and honey, like this!" I reached for the measuring spoons and started making the smoothie myself. "Sydney, could you hand me the spinach?"

Sydney nodded and handed me the bag. Her hands were still quivering. Ingredient by ingredient, I finished making the smoothie, talking the whole time. The class laughed again, Ms. J kept nodding and smiling, and Sydney didn't say a word. She didn't crack a smile, not even a fake one.

"And that's how you make a Swampwater Smoothie!" I finished with a flourish.

Ms. J and the class clapped while we cleaned up our mess. Sydney didn't look up.

"That was close, Tabitha," Sydney said. "You saved us." We were next to the huge maple tree in front of the school waiting for our parents. It was the first time she'd said a word since the presentation.

"Hey, what happened?" I asked. I was mad but didn't want to show it. It was unfair that I'd ended up doing all the work. And I had totally saved her.

"I guess talking in front of people is scarier than I thought," Sydney shrugged.

"Well, I can't do that when we're on TV next week," I said. I shifted the heavy bag of cooking equipment to my other shoulder. The measuring cups clanked against each other.

"Actually, I'm not sure I want to do the show anymore," Sydney said. She was talking in the tiny, quiet voice again.

"What?!" I was shocked. This is what we had always wanted. A chance to be TV chefs. "What do you mean? Why would you wreck our big break like this?"

"It was your fault," Sydney said, her voice getting bigger and louder, "You interrupted me and then you wouldn't stop talking. Besides, if you hadn't forgotten the script, this wouldn't have happened."

"Really? Then why didn't I mess up like you did?" The question hadn't sounded so mean in my head. Sydney's mom's car turned into the parking lot. I didn't have much time to fix this.

"That's not what I meant," I said. "What I meant was…" What had I meant? "I did fine without a script."

Sydney rolled her eyes.

I kept talking, "And … we never have a script. We do this all the time."

"No, we don't," Sydney said. "Cooking at home is not the same as cooking in front of other people."

"So you're quitting because you're scared?" I asked. It didn't seem possible. Since when was she afraid of anything? The girl who was the

first kid in the class to jump off the high dive at Oakwood Pool, and taught me to ride a bike no-handed?

Sydney crossed her arms and glared at me. "No, I'm quitting because I don't want to work with a show-off."

My mouth fell open. For the first time in a while, I couldn't think of anything to say. I didn't have a chance anyway. Just then, Sydney's mom pulled up to the curb. She smiled and waved at me, but Sydney got in without looking back.

I made up my mind. I was going to be on the Channel 7 morning show without Sydney. It turns out I didn't have a choice. The next day she talked to Ms. J before I did. Ms. J agreed that I could do the show alone. And then she told me even better news. There would be time in the segment to do a bonus recipe. Twice as much time in front of the camera, all by myself. But there was a hitch. Sydney had our cookbook. Without the cookbook, I didn't have a bonus recipe.

Sydney and I weren't exactly ignoring each other, but things weren't normal. A gloomy fog had settled between us. She loaned me a pencil for our spelling test but probably because Ms. J heard me ask. Then she partnered up with Ella Garcia in gym without looking in my direction, and she was nowhere to be seen at lunch. I knew I couldn't ask her for the cookbook. Besides, I kept thinking about how she had called me a show-off. Whatever. I could become a famous TV chef without her.

I looked down at the brownies. Something wasn't right. Maybe a few "somethings." The edges were burned and the middle looked like bubbly black tar. These weren't ordinary brownies either. They were another one of Sydney's "experiments." The secret ingredient was supposed to be beans. (I know.)

"Let's give those a try," my dad said. He cut—well, scooped two pieces onto a plate and set it between us. "Think you're ready for the show on Friday?"

"Not yet," I said. That was an understatement. This was my third batch of brownies since Saturday and they still hadn't turned out right. Not to mention, it wasn't much fun cooking alone.

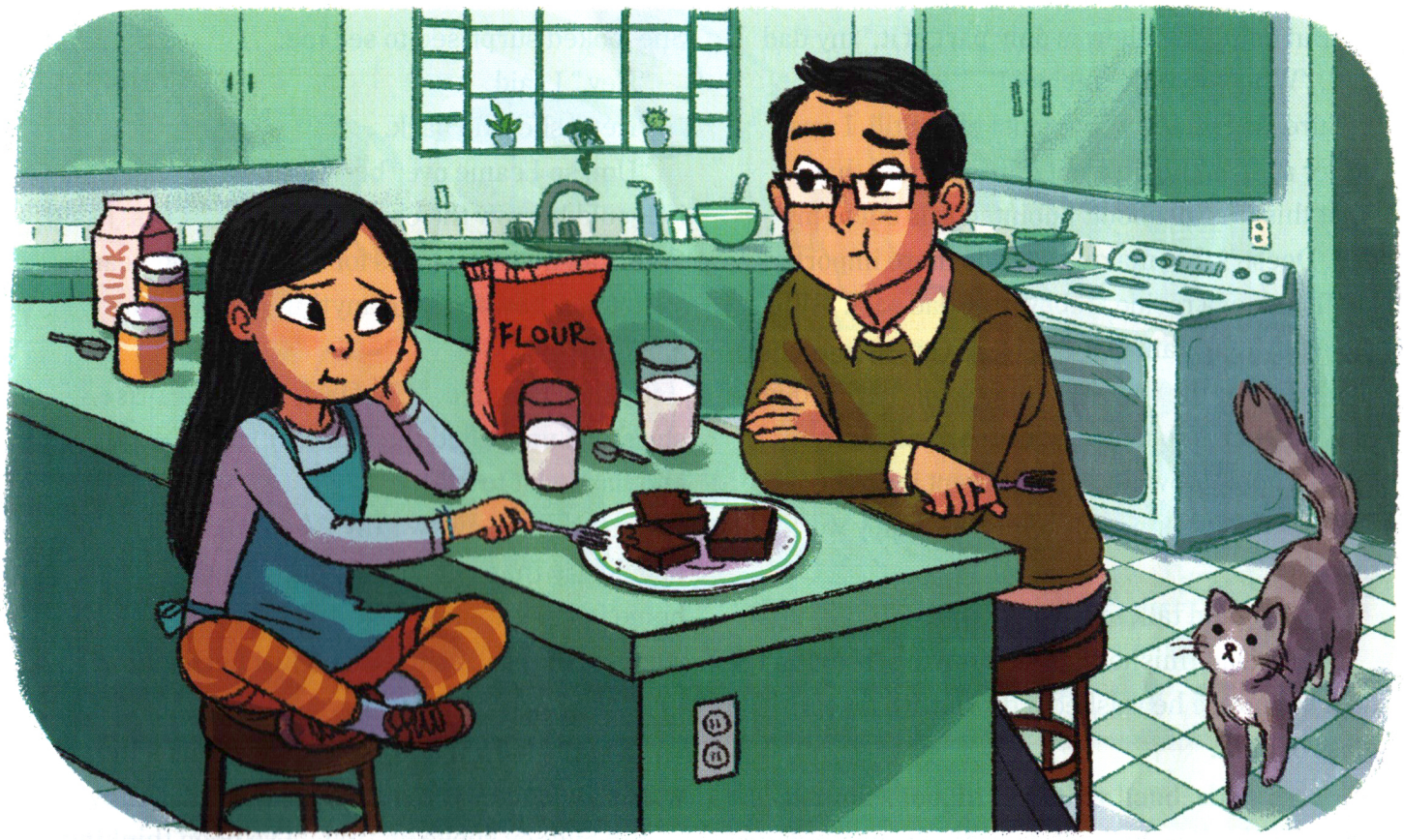
"People are different," Dad shrugged. "Even you and Sydney."

I missed Sydney. She always laughed at the ridiculous songs I made up and gave us fake chef names. And, if I was honest, she knew more about cooking than I did—especially how to fix a mistake and how to make brownies look and taste like … brownies.

"That's too bad about Sydney," my dad said, pulling two forks from a drawer.

"Yeah." I had told my parents a little about what happened but not everything. Not about our fight or the fact that we had pretty much stopped talking.

"Are there … raisins in these?" My dad



stopped chewing.

"Beans," I said. I took a bite myself. It tasted bad. Nothing like the ones Sydney and I had made together. Way more bean than brownie.

Dad started chewing again. I think he was being nice.

"Did you follow the recipe?" he asked.

I explained that I didn't exactly have the recipe. That it was in our confidential cookbook at Sydney's house. I had tried to make the brownies from memory, but I guess it wasn't working.

"Why don't you head over there and ask to borrow it?"

"Well," I said, picking at the burned, beany brownie with my fork, "I can't." And then before I could change my mind, the whole story came out: Sydney freaking out because we didn't have a script. Me saving the day. Our fight. Me deciding to go ahead without her. I knew Dad would see my side. He knew I wasn't a show-off.

But instead he said, "Hmm." Then he said, "It sounds like Sydney would've felt better if she had your script. Maybe she wouldn't be nervous if she knew what she was supposed to say." I pointed out, once again, that I hadn't needed the script.

"People are different," Dad shrugged. "Even you and Sydney."

I started thinking about our identical middle names, our matching bedrooms, our dream of becoming cookbook-writing, TV-show hosting, Broadway-singing chefs. I had always assumed Sydney and I were alike in every way. I had never realized the ways we were different. I fidgeted on the kitchen stool.

"Sounds like you need Sydney in order to pull this off."

"I just need the recipe," I said. "I can do the show by myself."

"But doing the show is only part of it," my dad said. "Who wrote the recipe?"

Sure, so Sydney wrote most of it. Still, I was better at speaking in front of people and that's what this was all about. I pointed this out to my dad. Doesn't that make what I do more important?

"Think of a recipe, Tabby," my dad said. "What's the most important ingredient in a brownie recipe? The sugar or the flour?" I knew it was a trick question. Neither. You need both sugar and flour to make a good brownie. Two different ingredients can make something awesome when they work together.

"So I should talk to her?" I asked.

"Yep." Dad finished off the brownie. I couldn't help but notice he washed it down with an entire glass of milk.

took my time getting to Sydney's. She lived only two blocks away, but I avoided my usual shortcuts and stuck to the sidewalks instead. At first I was nervous. Then I rehashed our fight and I got mad again. By the time I reached her front door, I was just confused. I thought I would have some big speech prepared, but I couldn't think of anything to say. This time I was the one who needed a script.

Ms. Kowalski, Sydney's mom, answered the door. She smiled when she saw me. "Tabitha! Come on in!"

"Sydney's in her room," she said and waved to the stairs.

Sydney was reading in her polka-dot beanbag chair. Her pet lizard Ike sat in his cage under the red glow of a heat lamp. He ignored me, as usual. I bet Sydney wished she could ignore me too. She looked surprised to see me.

"Hey," I said.

"Hey," she said back.

"Um, so I came over because I was wondering if I could borrow the cookbook," I said. "Ms. J said that I can do two recipes for the show and I can't remember how to make anything besides the smoothie."

Sydney frowned. "Uh, OK." To my surprise, she stood up, pulled the binder off a bookshelf, and handed it to me.

I stood there awkwardly. I had what I needed. I could say thanks and walk out. I could be back home in ten minutes, easy. But I remembered what my dad had said. I didn't just need a recipe, I needed my friend.

"So ..." I looked down at the binder as if the words I needed were scribbled across it.

But Sydney spoke up first, "I've been thinking. I want to say I'm sorry for calling you a show-off. That was mean . . . and I know I hurt your feelings."

I sighed with relief.

"I'm sorry for forgetting the script," I said. "And for getting so mad at you. I should've put myself in your shoes. I didn't realize how important it was to you."

We were both quiet for a minute.

"I was wondering if maybe you'd give it another try?" I said. "What if we make sure to have the script this time? Would you still do the show?"

Sydney pinched her lips together and looked at Ike instead of me.

I started talking before she had a chance to say no. "I thought I was more important because I did all the talking, but if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have anything to talk about. We both need each other. We're like sugar and flour. Neither one is more important. Plus, I'll be there to help!"

Sydney raised an eyebrow.

"Or not," I said quickly. "I mean, I'll actually help, not just take over."

"Fine, I'll give it a try." Sydney smiled. "But can I be sugar?"

"You can be whatever you want!"

"This time I'll bring the script," Sydney said. "You write the new section though, OK? You're better at coming up with the right words."

"Of course!" I said. It felt like a wind was blowing the fog away. Being a chef hadn't been the same without Sydney. Nothing was.

On Friday morning, we were the last pair to make our recipe. As we watched the other kids under the bright lights of the spotless TV kitchen, I started to get a fluttery feeling in my stomach. Just then Sydney grinned at me and squeezed my hand. I knew she was nervous, too. In her other hand, she was clutching our new script. We had worked on it for a long time but had so much fun writing it that it didn't seem like work at all. It made me realize that it didn't matter what Sydney and I did together. Besides, we decided that if the TV thing didn't work out, we could always write cookbooks together. And of course, there was always Broadway. ★

Meet the Author

Andrea Debbink

When I was in middle school, my friends and I recorded our own pretend cooking show. We created a script, theme song, and even had commercials. Today I still love to cook and bake, just not on camera!

This or That?

Flower Frenzy

Would you rather...

see a cloud that looks like a turtle **OR** a duck?

dance in the rain **OR** spot a rainbow?

have a tree house **OR** a secret flower garden?

have an umbrella with hearts on it **OR** a polka-dot kite?

wear an acorn headband **OR** a robin's-egg necklace?

dress like a fairy **OR** a firefly?

play with chicks **OR** baby bunnies?

drink lavender lemonade **OR** a sunshine smoothie?

bake a daffodil cake **OR** rose cookies?

try to catch butterflies **OR** ladybugs?

live in a birdhouse **OR** a fairy house?

climb a giant dandelion **OR** sleep on a bed of flowers?

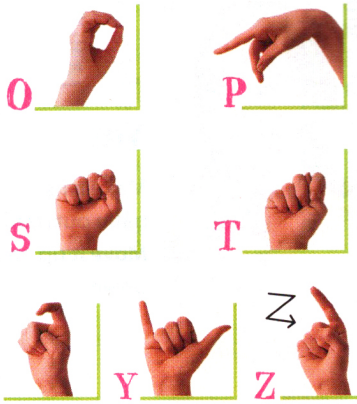
Illustrations: Erica Sirotich

Illustrations: Monika Roe

People

I, Me

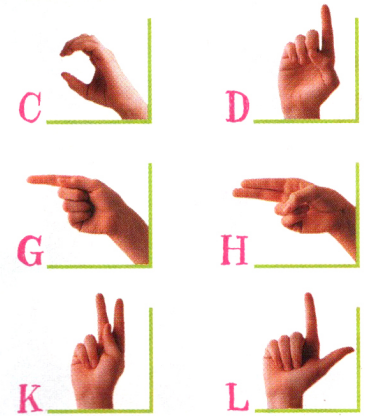
With first finger, point to yourself.



A

Friend

With right palm facing up and left palm facing down, hook first fingers together. Reverse.



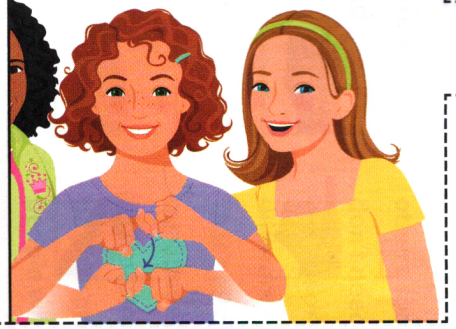
B

Happy

Put palm on chest. Brush hand up and out twice.

sign "happy" and "me." To sign a name or place, you spell out the word letter by letter. Turn the page and learn a little ASL!

—Your friends at American Girl



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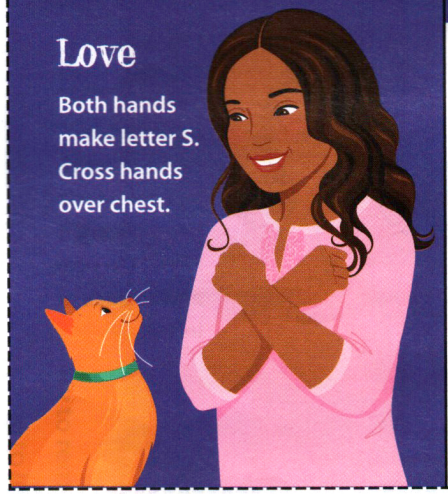
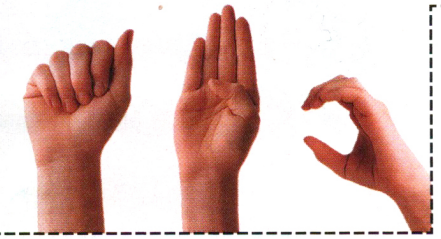


Love

Both hands make letter S. Cross hands over chest.

Learn a Little

Sign Language

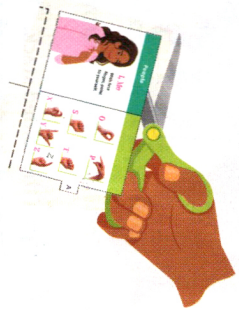


D

Mini Book

Make a Mini Book! All you need are scissors and a stapler. Read the directions all the way through before you begin.

1. Cut out each pair of pages only on the dotted lines. Be sure to cut around the tabs marked with the letters A, B, C, and D.



2. Stack the pages on top of one another in the order shown below, with the letters on the tabs facing up.

Continued

Mini Book

3. Fold the stack of pages in half along the solid line in the center. The cover of the magazine should now be on top. Run your fingernail down the folded edge to help the pages lie flat.

4. Open the folded stack. Staple along the center line. Cut off the tabs, and you're done!

You

With first finger, point to other person.

Dear Reader,

American Sign Language is a language that was developed by and for deaf people. Each ASL gesture expresses a concept. For instance, to say "I'm happy" in ASL, you would

Fun

Both hands make letter H, left palm facing down. Bring right H to nose and to back of left H.

Ready to begin?

Yes

Make a fist, palm outward. Move it up and down.

No

Bring thumb and first two fingers together in a snapping motion.

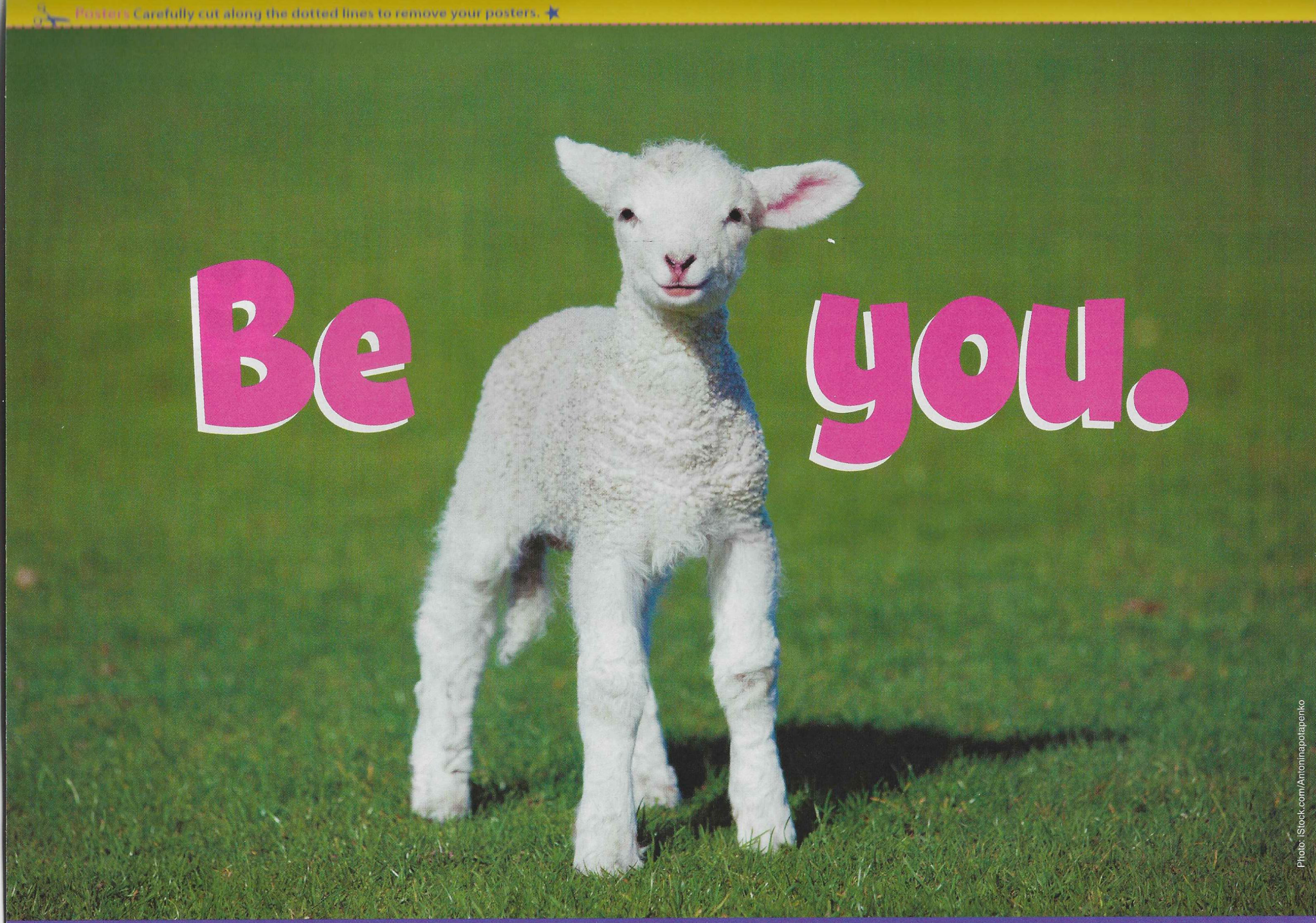
ASL Fingerspelling

Fun and Feelings

Play

Both hands make letter Y. Twist hands back and forth.

Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters.



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HELP!

Dear *American Girl*,

I get good grades and win a lot of contests. I love competing. But people get mad at me for winning and getting good grades. One friend even told me that I had already won once and should let someone else win. I can't even smile anymore when I do well.

Frowning

Dear *American Girl*,

My friend always says that I'm a goody two-shoes. I just follow the rules because I don't want to get in trouble. I think my friend likes me, but that really hurt my feelings. Why did she say that?

The Good Girl

Dear *American Girl*,

People at my school say I'm weird because I speak with an accent and because my mom is from a country they don't like. I thought I had made some friends, but I was wrong—they just started making fun of me. It feels awful.

Friendship Troubles

Dear *American Girl*,

Everyone in my class calls me a bookworm because I read a lot of books. I mean, I REALLY love to read, but is that a problem? It didn't feel like a problem, but people are treating me weird.

Bookworm?

Try to remember: Not everyone is going to like you. All that matters is that you like yourself. This goes for anyone who is treated poorly by others, for whatever reason. You don't need to feel bad about who you are or apologize for any difference that makes you unique. That's all differences are—the qualities and ideas that make you an amazing *you*. It's important to be your most confident self around people who try to tear you down. Protect yourself from other people's negative energy, and always report anyone who bullies you. The people to keep close are the ones who appreciate you for exactly who you are. If you haven't found them yet, please keep looking.

Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters.

MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl,*

I am home-schooled, and I love it so much! It's just that I have only a few friends—two, actually—and I don't get to see them much. How can I make more friends and be more social?

Social, Please

Joining a class, club, or team is a great way for anyone to meet new people. Ask a parent for help researching what's available for kids in your community, whether it's a city recreation department or a network of other home-schooling families. From there, choose something that works in your schedule and sounds like fun (math? pottery? acting? kickball?), and don't be afraid to say hi first to anyone in your new group. Good luck!

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I'm 12, and my mom still buys my sister and me matching outfits. I love my sister, but I don't want to match her. My mom always says no and keeps on buying the outfits.

want to wear what I want to wear

Your mom might really enjoy buying those outfits, so be kind when you bring it up. Try this: "Mom, I'm growing up. Matching outfits used to be fun, but it's time for me to choose my own style." It's often hard for parents to realize that you're not so little anymore. Speaking calmly about topics like this (instead of shouting or whining) should help you make your point.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I read about the Shining Stars in your magazine and think, *Wow, those girls are amazing. I want to be like them.* The problem is, I don't know how.

no shine

Here's something true: For every girl we feature, there are *thousands* whose stories we don't tell. If your name never appears on our pages, that's mostly because there simply is not enough room to print all the amazing things girls do. It doesn't matter who you are. If you've made even the tiniest positive difference in the world—such as holding the door for someone, loaning a friend a pencil on test day, or even being kind to someone when you don't really feel like it—you *are* a Shining Star. The girls we choose to write about remind us how good it feels to *do* good, and we hope you feel the same way after reading their stories. Keep on being the amazing girl you are, and be sure to stay in touch. We always love hearing about what you're up to.

★

even MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl,*

I did something to a friend that I really wish I hadn't. I try to apologize, but she ignores me. She also tells everyone that I'm mean and selfish. How do I prove to her that I'm sorry?

Help!

Ask your friend to meet with you in person to talk. Say, "I am so sorry for what I did. I really wish I hadn't done it, and I feel awful for hurting you. I'll make sure it doesn't happen again by . . ." and add specifics. Your friend might need some time to forgive you, but you'll have made a good, necessary first step in trying to fix your friendship.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

Whenever I laugh, my face gets red and my eyes water. And of course everyone thinks I'm crying. People make fun of me—including my teacher! I can't help it. What do I do?

NOT CRYING

Ugh—why do people have to point out the things that embarrass us?! This could be a physical thing that you can't change, so you might feel better if you learn to shrug off silly, insensitive comments. "Whaat? I'm not *crying*—I'm laughing. That was hilarious!" If you don't get upset, people might learn to stop making a big deal about this with you.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I have very many fears. Fire, tornadoes, sharks . . . I tell myself over and over again that everything will be OK, but the scary thoughts always pop into my head again. How can I make my fears disappear?

Too many fears

It's normal to be scared of scary things—after all, avoiding danger keeps you safe! The key, though, is to figure out what you need to worry about and what you can let go. If there's a tornado warning near you, take action! But being afraid of the *idea* of tornadoes doesn't do you any good. It's important to find a distraction, which is anything you can think about or do to take your mind off your worries. If getting distracted isn't keeping the fears away, talk to a parent about this—a doctor or therapist might be able to help you untangle the healthy fears from the extra worries you don't need hanging around.

★

Advice from You

"Every time you do something wrong, you are closer to doing it right. So keep on trying."

Caroline S.

Age 10, Pennsylvania

Need advice? Got advice? Write:

Help!

***American Girl* magazine**

8400 Fairway Place

Middleton, WI 53562

Lots of kids, lots of fun! Kaiya and her family had a blast at our photo shoot.

Our lifestyle editor Andrea entered our story contest when she was 10 years old. While she didn't win, she is now an AG editor and wrote the short story for this issue!

She also made the crafts in this issue's "Style Your Space."

Behind the Scenes

This issue was filled with *egg*-cellent crafts, decor, and fun!

Check out these two fun-brellas!

Maggie, age 10, designed an umbrella that's creating quite a buzz.

And Vivianne, age 10, created this lovely lady-bugrella.

Did you like learning sign language? For more fun, visit www.americangirl.com/play to learn how to fingerspell your name.

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Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

Coming up in the May/June issue of *American Girl* magazine

Glam-a-Pajama
Throw a slumber party full of sparkles and smiles!

Really Rainbow
Check out new colorful fashions designed by readers like you.

Hotel Happy
Discover what style of hotel you love.

Brownie Blast
Delicious desserts to make and share.

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